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ABSTRACT

This study examined the Young Adult Library Service Association's (YALSA's) Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) recommended list for the years 1994-98 in order to determine if the list provides diversity in terms of the content of books and the gender and ethnicity of the authors and editors whose works appear on it. The results of the study concluded that, although the BBYA list showed diversity from different points of view, it did have some shortcomings. The works of minority authors, although represented on the list, appeared in numbers less than one would expect based upon their presence in the U.S. population overall. The same held true for the numbers of minority protagonists appearing in fictional works. Diversity in terms of content was also lacking to some extent. For both nonfiction and fiction books, the BBYA list contained a large number of certain types of genres and subject matter, while other kinds of form and content were few in number. Despite its shortcomings, YALSA's BBYA list does provide an exceptional source that librarians and teachers can use to select and recommend appropriate materials for their young adult patrons and students. Appendices include the YALSA BBYA policies and procedures, coding sheets used in this research, and data analysis tables. Contains 21 references. (Author/MES)

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A Question of Diversity:

An Analysis of the Young Adult Library Service Association's Best Books for Young Adults 1994-1998

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A Master's Research Paper submitted to the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Library Science

by
Anna R. Benedikt
March 1999

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A Question of Diversity:

An Analysis of the Young Adult Library Service Association's Best Books for Young Adults 1994-1998

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ABSTRACT. Researchers have discovered that in order for adolescents to develop into enthusiastic and competent readers, many require access to a wide variety of interesting reading materials written at many levels. One of the main collection management tools available to librarians is the recommended list and The Young Adult Library Service Association's (YALSA) Best Books For Young Adults (BBYA) is a recommended list that is heavily used by librarians in making collection decisions. This study was an attempt to determine if the BBYA list provides diversity in terms of the content of books and the gender and ethnicity of the authors and editors whose works appear on it. The results of this study concluded that although the BBYA lists did show diversity from different points of view, the list did have some shortcomings. The works of minority authors though represented on the list, appeared in numbers less than one would expect based upon their presence in the United States population overall. The same held true for the numbers of minority protagonists appearing in fiction works. Diversity in terms of content was also lacking to some extent. For both nonfiction and fiction books the BBYA list contained a large number of certain types, genres and subject matter while other kinds of form and content were few in number. Despite its shortcomings, YALSA's BBYA list does provide an exceptional source from which librarians and teachers can use to select and recommend appropriate materials for their young adult patrons and students.

Master's Research Paper by

Anna R. Benedikt

B.S., Ithaca College, 1984

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1999

Approved by

Adviser Lorrie Van Fleet Date April 9, 1999

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With much appreciation to my family for their patience,
George, Joshua and Monica

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"Who is the Young Adult?" This is a question for which there is no clear answer. Young Adults have been defined as "persons in a transitional period when they no longer see themselves as children but are not regarded by others as fully adult."[1] This very broad definition leaves much room for interpretation. Perhaps this is because there is no such thing as a "typical" young adult. In fact, one major characteristic of this age group is its great variability. Early adolescence is a period of tremendous change in biological, social, emotional and intellectual development. There can be as much as a six-year gap in biological age between youths of the same chronological age.[2] Since there is so much diversity among young adults in terms of their interests, and needs, and because they vary so much in terms of their capacities for insight, and levels of maturity, young adults are not well understood by society. Often times, adults, rather than trying to understand these young people have chosen to ignore them in favor of "waiting for them to grow up."[3] Unfortunately, some libraries and librarians have tended to take this approach too.

For many years public library services to young adults throughout the United States have had less breadth and depth than other patron groups have. However, many in the library profession feel that service to this group is essential if the youth of our society are to develop lifelong habits of using the library. Findings from a study conducted in 1985 by the Project on Adolescent Literacy staff at the Center for Early Adolescence showed that young adults have a wide variety of literature needs that are largely unmet, and that school and public librarians are indispensable partners in any prescription to

satisfy these needs.[4] They discovered that in order for adolescents to develop into enthusiastic and competent readers, many require both access to a wide variety of interesting reading materials written at many levels as well as mentors who encourage and support them as they learn to read.[5] Teens need accessible and dependable information on issues that affect their lives, issues such as drug abuse, alcoholism, child abuse and pregnancy. In addition, teens want high quality literature to read for pleasure and curiosity.[6]

It is extremely important that a dynamic assortment of books for young adults be a part of any school or public library collection, and librarians who serve this population need to put forth a great deal of effort into making their selections. They need to have a collection management policy that would allow them to possess items of as high a quality as possible in order for their library to offer the best and most useful resources for their young adult patrons. One of the main collection management tools available to librarians is the recommended list.[7] Such lists published by knowledgeable practitioners and academicians are invaluable not only in helping selectors make acquisition decisions, but also in aiding them in evaluating their current collections to insure that important titles are represented.

The Young Adult Library Service Association or YALSA, sponsors a recommended booklists, the Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA). It is designed for youths between the age of twelve and eighteen. Initially started in 1930, this list is compiled by a committee of the American Library Association and is used by both public and school librarians in developing their collections.[8] The mission of the BBYA list is to represent a general list of fiction and nonfiction titles selected for their proven or

potential appeal to the personal reading tastes of the young adult.[9] The selected works should be of acceptable literary merit and be effective in their presentation. The books should also span a variety of subjects as well as a broad range of reading levels.[10] (See Appendix A for the Young Adult Library Services Association Best Books for Young Adults Policies and Procedures).

Purpose of the Study

Since the BBYA list is so heavily used by librarians in making collection decisions, it strongly influences what young adults are likely to find on the shelves of their local public or school library. In some cases, it also affects which book librarians recommend to them. It is therefore very important to determine if in fact the BBYA list does contain works that help to fulfill its stated mission to create a diverse selection of books that appeal to young adults, and the purpose of this study is to ascertain this information. This study analyzes the BBYA list in an attempt to find out whether or not the books included are diversified in terms of topic, reading level, and author and protagonist ethnicity, as well as a variety of other factors. It is also an attempt to determine if listed books meet the needs of the young adults whose reading the list is trying to promote. If the BBYA list does not contain a variety of books that appeal to young adults, the adolescent population will not be well served, and the library may lose its ability to be effective in aiding in their development as enthusiastic and competent readers.

Definition of Terms

Young Adult- Although the accepted age range for this population group varies, the Best Books for Young Adults Committee recognizes this population as those persons between the age of 12 and 18. This is roughly equivalent to children in grades 7 through 12. Amazon.com, however includes children 9-12 in a category other than young adult, so in this analysis, young adult will encompass those youths age 13 and up.

Young Adult Literature- The Best Books for Young Adults Committee considers Young Adult Literature to be that read by young adults. These works include fiction and nonfiction titles considered appropriate for young adults, ages 12 through 18, by the YALSA committee. The books do not have to be published primarily for young adults, however.

Young Adult Library Service Association, or YALSA- The committee of the American Library Association (ALA) that compiles the Best Books for Young Adults recommended booklist.

Best Books for Young Adults- A list of books recommended by YALSA for young adults between the ages of 12 and 18. Each of these books is selected based upon their proven or potential appeal and value to young adults. This list is used both as a collection development tool for libraries as well as to promote reading among young adults. This lists represents books published within the assigned calendar year as well as those from September 1st to December 31st of the previous year.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the analysis of those books recommended on The Best Books for Young Adults Reading list for the years 1994-1998 as published in the March 15th or April 1st issues of *Booklist*. (See Appendix B) Therefore the results from this study cannot be generalized to other lists of recommended books. In addition, this study does not attempt to make judgements as to the quality of the books on YALSA's list.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1978, directors of public libraries in the United States were asked their opinions about the future of young adult services in public libraries. One noteworthy result of the survey was that for research in the area of public library young adult service was deemed very desirable.[11]

Young Adults have proven to be consistent users of libraries and comprise a large percentage of any given total local population. A survey conducted in 1988 by the National Center for Education shows that teens between the ages of 12-18 constitute 25% of public library patrons even though they only make up 10% of the American population.[12] Despite this, respondents reported that while 84% of public libraries have young adult collections, only 11 percent of libraries hire young adult librarians, and that on average only 16% of library budgets are spent on young adult materials.[13]

There are several reasons why young adult users may be shortchanged. For one, this patron group does not have the financial resources and verbal clout necessary to ensure their own services and programming. Secondly, librarians may resist developing a collection specifically designed for this population group because they are unsure as to what the unique needs of their young adult population are and what it is that they seek from the books they choose. In addition, public library services to youths are often the first to be cut during tight budgets since public libraries may feel that this population is being served by school libraries which may or may not be able to pick up the slack.

Prior to the 1970s, children's and young adult services developed through instinct rather than by knowledge grounded in research. Little research was accomplished other than experiments in summer reading club participation.[14] Since the 1970s, many studies have been done in two broad categories under the reading guidance service offered by public librarians. The first describes the personal reading interests of children and young adults. The second is a content analysis of the books that deal with a particular subject or characteristic.[15]

The way librarians view young adults' usage patterns in the library affects the way they select materials. Lists of recommended works such as the Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) are invaluable in choosing important titles, yet these lists cannot tell librarians whether or not the material is appropriate for particular collections. These lists denote books of high quality, yet materials must be analyzed as a whole to assess whether they are meeting both the needs of the population they serve, as well as adhering to the goals and policies of the institutions to which they belong.

In making collection decisions librarians need to be sensitive to the various intellectual, ethnic, and religious groups in the community.[16] At the same time, however, the library collections should reflect various sides of controversial issues thereby providing teens the opportunity to be exposed to various points of view.

In addition to being familiar with the composition of their community, librarians also need to be aware of trends, interests and reading levels of the young in order to successfully evaluate materials. In the early 70's, the New York Times surveyed approximately 100 school librarians in an attempt to learn what it is that young adults seek from their reading materials. Findings showed that teens wanted more serious and

advanced materials and ones that are pertinent to their school assignments. They also sought works relevant to their current interests and problems, as well as material about minorities and other cultures. In addition, teen book choices were very likely to be influenced by movies and television shows, and they frequently sought books from bestseller lists. Another finding was that adolescents sought out easier reading materials, often opting for shorter books, with paperbacks proving especially popular.[17]

Nationwide, among public school librarians, library school faculty and administrators, informal surveys have found that fiction always ranks very highly among young adults.[18] Titles on an almost endless variety of subjects are now published for young adult readers. Preferred ones continue to be heavily illustrated books on animals, horror movies, rock music, custom cars and motorcycles. Space travel and new medical technologies are also popular subjects, as are sports, mysteries, humor, science fiction, fantasy, minorities, biographies, histories and poetry. Novels in series, especially romances and fantasies prove to be very popular also.[19]

Nonfiction titles have proven to be very popular with young adults too. In 1987, The International Reading Association's Young Adults' Choices project showed that 10% of the books selected as favorites were nonfiction.[20] In the 1988 poll, the figure increased to 20%.[21] In 1972, Purves and Beach concluded that nonfiction became an increasingly important component in overall reading preferences as young adults matured. They also found that adolescents of different reading levels have comparable interests.[22]

George Norvell in his extensive 1973 reading study used data collected from 2,556,090 students responding to 4,993 reading selections. He reached the conclusion

that at about the fourth grade a strong interest in nonfiction emerges and that interest grows during adolescence. He also determined that gender remains the most powerful determiner of reading interests, concluding that more boys than girls prefer nonfiction.[23] A Gallup survey in 1996 clearly confirms this trend of older teenagers choosing nonfiction works more often than younger teenagers. The survey revealed that only 19% of books bought by younger teens were nonfiction. Among older adolescents, however, that figure was 40%.[24]

In addition, research shows that while young adults are interested in both serious and advanced materials relating to their school assignments, it is also clear that young adults choose nonfiction books for pleasure as well, particularly those pertinent to their current interests and problems. In fact, a 1986 study of Junior High School students conducted in Houston Texas showed that the majority of nonfiction books circulated were not checked out for school assignment but rather, for recreational reading.[25]

Over the years there has been criticism that the BBYA list fails to reflect the true reading tastes of young adults.[26] Although teen's opinions have been well received by the BBYA, questions about how much direct input these teens should have on the final BBYA list has remained unresolved because questions were raised about how mature and reliable teens analyses are of their own leisure reading.[27] Since this issue has not been resolved, the best solution may be to provide a broad selection of material to meet the diverse tastes of the young adult audience.

In 1987-88, the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of the Teachers of English (ALAN) examined young adult unsupervised responses to favored books and determined that both teen and adult readers have subjective, personal

and often diverse opinions on the books they read.[28] Even though the youths lacked sophistication and an extensive reading background they were able to discern the qualities in a book that make it outstanding. However, the young adults' limited knowledge about available works and their limited experiences with literature were evident. In addition, young people's tendency to respond to books in terms of their own tastes and interests, and not in terms of their broader appeal was also problematic.[29] But Tim Bowler, of the United Kingdom's *New Statesman* in his article "Let the young decide what they read", feels the young don't need our help in determining what is appropriate to their needs. He says that "to suggest that the young lack the discriminative powers to work out which [books] are right for them and which are not is to patronise them appallingly."[30] At present, the issue of how much input young adults should have in the compilation of the BBYA list is as of yet unresolved.

It is clearly evident that young adults are a varied and complex group of individuals yet every effort must be made to assure them the same right to service as children and adults. However, for many public libraries, quality collection development for teens will not be possible as long as those in the library profession continue to ignore the existence of adolescents and their special needs.[31] Acknowledging teens to be a vital user population and showing sensitivity to their reading interests will help librarians in making appropriate decisions about what to include in young adult collections. Since recommended book lists are heavily used by librarians in their selection policies, it is of the utmost importance that these lists are not only high in quality, but that they are also reflective of what young adults seek from the books they choose to read. As a group, young adults are diverse, and their reading tastes are diverse. Therefore the best way to

serve them is to recommend to them lists offering a diverse collection of works. This study will analyze the listing of The Young Adult Library Services Association's Best Books for Young Adults to determine if its offerings meet the necessary criteria.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze the Best Books for Young Adults as selected by the Young Adult Library Services Association, an analysis has been performed on all of the books that have been included on the lists from 1994-1998. The listing of these books has been gathered from *Booklist's* March 15th or April 1st issues that contain the annotated lists that span this five-year time period (See Appendix B). At present there is no prescribed number of books that are included in each year's list. For example, the 1998 list included 26 nonfiction titles and 58 fiction titles for a total of 84 titles. The 1997 list includes only 70 titles of fiction and nonfiction works combined. Altogether, for the years spanning 1994-1998, the BBYA list contains 120 nonfiction titles and 266 fiction titles for a total of 386 books.

Each book represented on the list was entered into the Internet database of Amazon.com, the largest independent online bookstore located on the World Wide Web. This website located at www.amazon.com contains over 2.5 million book titles and was selected as the primary source for this study because it is the reference that was considered most likely to contain all of the information deemed necessary for this research. (Data gathered is represented on the coding form, See Appendix C.) In addition to author, title, and publisher, Amazon's listings include the total number of pages, the availability of hardcover and paperback editions, and reading or grade levels for whom the book is appropriate. Also, in many cases, book entries include a synopsis of the work as well as full text reviews from such valuable sources as *Booklist, Kirkus Reviews* and

Horn Books. These sources can provide further information as to genre, the thematic nature of the book and details on protagonist characteristics.

In fact, Amazon.com did contain all of the 386 books contained on the BBYA list. In some rare cases however, their entry was insufficient in providing the needed information, and Books in Print and NoveList databases were consulted (See Appendix D). These sources were used as secondary search location and were only consulted when critical information was not obtainable in an Amazon.com entry. Due to time constraints, in cases where desired information could not be obtained by any of the above means, no further attempts were made to find it. There are notations stating that the information could not be located on the tables of data in the appendix. It has also been mentioned in the Findings and Analysis of Data section of this paper.

Two exceptions have been made to the above policy, however. In many cases information pertaining to the author's gender and ethnicity was not always available from any of the above sources. In these instances, every attempt was made to find the information from the Contemporary Literary Criticism Select Galenet Databases, (which includes Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Literary Criticism and The Dictionary of Literary Biography- See Appendix D). Once again, when such information could not be obtained, it is noted on the tables in Appendix E as well as in the Findings and Analysis of Data section of this paper. In addition, Amazon.com did not specifically mention a book's genre. When the entry alone made it difficult to determine the best way for making this classification, Teen Genreflecting, by Diana Tixier Herald was referred to for the purpose of making this determination. However, since most of the books on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults list were too recent to be included in this

publication, this researcher used her best judgement in making genre determinations based on all of the available information. Since many books are not easily classified into specific genre or genres, and since any one person's interpretation of a work is subjective, some may differ with the researcher's conclusions in this area.

The following information has been collected about each book on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults. The data was input on coding sheets so that an analysis of the books on the list could be performed. Although initially only one coding sheet was thought to be necessary, it readily became apparent that separate coding sheets needed to be developed for nonfiction and fiction books to take into account their unique characteristics (See Appendix C). In addition, during the course of data collection, it became obvious that the preconceived classification of materials as noted on the coding sheet did not correspond well to the actual data that was obtained. Therefore the coding sheets were used only as a guide and the actual information obtained from the data collection was used in the analysis. In addition, other information obtained on the coding sheet was later determined to be unnecessary for use in this study. On the following page is an explanation of the variables that were studied.

LIST COMPOSITION: This will note whether a book is fiction or nonfiction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: This included basic information about the work such as the author's name and the year that the book appeared on YALSA's list.

HARDBACK/PAPERBACK AVAILABILITY: This contains information as to the availability of the books on the list in hardback and/or paperback as designated by Amazon.com.

INTENDED AUDIENCE: This addresses the audience for which a particular book is intended. Amazon.com uses four classifications to communicate the appropriate audience; preschool to age 3, ages 4-8, ages 9-12, and Young Adult. When no mention is made of appropriate age level, a Not Specified category has been used on the coding sheet to make note of this. According to Amazon.com their information regarding the appropriateness of books for a particular age level is obtained from information given to them by a book's publisher. Those books for which an intended audience is not specified are assumed not to be primarily for a children's or young adult audience although in some cases they may be appropriate for some portion of the youth audience. It must be noted that Amazon.com starts their young adult category at age 13, not 12 as YALSA does.

AUTHOR REPRESENTATION: This notes the number of authors that have appeared on the BBYA lists for the years under study and tracks the frequency with which they have appeared. It also indicates how many of first time novelists have appeared on the list.

AUTHOR'S AND/OR EDITOR'S GENDER AND ETHNICITY: The author's gender and ethnicity are recorded whenever available. When this information was not readily available from the Amazon.com entry, Books in Print, Novelist and Contemporary Literary Criticism Select Galenet Databases were consulted.

FORMAT/TYPE: This differentiated the books in terms of their format and book type. For the nonfiction works this allowed for the distinction between biographies, works of poetry, collections of short stories, etc. (See Appendix C) For the fiction works format was meant merely to distinguish between novels and short story anthologies.

SETTING-TIME(S) AND PLACE(S): This delineates the range of time during which the book takes place. It will also mention the geographic location where the book takes place.

THEMES OF NONFICTION BOOKS: The topic of the nonfiction books on YALSA's list will be noted. If the books are composed of a combination of topics, all of the specific topics contained will be mentioned. For example, a biography of an African American sports star will be considered a mixed topic since it is both about the African American experience as well as a sports book.

GENRE(S) FOR FICTION BOOKS: The type of book, be it humor or horror, will be noted. If the book combines two or more genre, this will be noted as well. For example, some books are a combination of historical fiction and romance. Once again, Amazon.com does not specifically mention a book's genre although it is sometimes noted in a synopsis or book review. When this information was not easily obtained from the amazon.com entry Teen Genreflecting was consulted. When no specific genre classification was available from either of these sources, the researcher assigned

was available from either of these sources, the researcher assigned classifications using her judgement based upon the information from the amazon.com synopsis and relevant reviews.

REALISTIC FICTION-SUBTOPICS: The genre category "realistic fiction" can be further divided into several sub-topics, or themes. The various subtopics are noted. If the book combines two or more subtopics, the specific sub-topics that compose the work are noted. For example, some books may contain dual sub-topic themes of substance abuse and violence. Both are noted.

PROTAGONIST(S) CHARACTERISTICS FOR FICTION BOOKS: This will examine the age, gender and ethnicity of the book's protagonist(s). Where it was not possible to obtain this information, notations were made on the appropriate tables as well as in the Findings and Analysis of Data section of this paper.

The information gathered from each book on the above variables was tallied and the results were compiled. Data was analyzed to see what patterns have emerged and tables of frequency distributions have been used to illustrate them. These tables are included in Appendix E. In addition, findings have been compared to the known subject interests and other preferences of young adults based upon various research studies. The findings of this study are reported in the Findings and Analysis of Data section located in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

List Composition of nonfiction and fiction books of the BBYA List, 1994-1998

Below is some general background information about the books represented on the BBYA lists for the 5 years under study.

Numbers of Nonfiction and Fiction Books Represented

The Best Books for Young Adults recommended lists from 1994-1998 contain 386 works. Of those works, 120, or 31% are nonfiction while the remaining 266, or 69% are works of fiction. Tables 1 A and 1 B represent this data collectively as stated, and further break down the data year by year for more careful analysis. For the period under study the nonfiction books were in a range from a low of 24% to a high of 42%. Since works of fiction rank very highly among young adults, and circulate at higher rates, it appears as though their greater numbers are warranted. However, a strong representation (nearly one third) of nonfiction titles is also appropriate. As previously mentioned, nonfiction works have also been proven to be popular among young adults, especially males and the more mature adolescents.[32] (See Tables 1 A and 1 B in Appendix E.)

Availability of Paperbacks in nonfiction and fiction books

Due to the fact that research shows that paperbacks are especially popular among young adults, an analysis of books was performed to determine if books on the BBYA list were largely available in this format. The results as depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4 show

that while 75.8% of nonfiction titles are available in hardback, only 57.5% were available in paperback. On the other hand, while about the same percentage of fiction books (75%) were available in hardback, fully 86.8% were available in paperback. Although there are many possible reasons for this disparity, it is not within the scope of this study to analyze them. It is merely important to note that of the total number of books on the list, more than three quarters (77.7%,) were available in the teen preferred paperback format. (See Tables 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix E.)

Intended Audience in nonfiction and fiction books

Tables 5, 6 and 7 represent the intended audience for the books on the BBYA lists, 1994-1998 as designated by Amazon.com. Although the vast majority of works are shown to be for an audience of at least 9 years, 4 books which were deemed appropriate by YALSA were shown by Amazon.com to be of an audience level for ages 4-8. These were mostly picture books that YALSA apparently considered appropriate for older children as well. These books account for roughly 1% of the total books on the list and are therefore unlikely to be significant.

Of the nonfiction books, over one quarter (26.7%) were deemed appropriate by their publishers, and therefore Amazon.com, for ages 9-12, while only slightly more than one-fifth (20.3%) of the fiction works were in this age category. Additionally, although only 30% of the nonfiction works are considered to be specifically designed for the young adult audience, more than double that amount, or 61.3% of the fiction books on the list are so specified. Of those books that were not designated for the youth audience, slightly over 40% of nonfiction books as opposed to only 18% of fiction books, appear to

be largely geared for an adult audience. Yet they too have been deemed appropriate by YALSA members for the young adult audience.

In total, only 51.6% of the books on the 1994-1998 BBYA list are in Amazon.com's young adult category, while another 22.2% are in their age 9-12 category. (Note that the YALSA committee considers the age at which young adulthood starts at 12, while Amazon.com young adult category begins at the age of 13. Therefore the results of this analysis are not completely comparable.) In addition, for both nonfiction and fiction books on the BBYA list, a quarter (25.1%) are not specified as being geared primarily for a juvenile or young adult audience. (See tables 5, 6, and 7 in Appendix E for more precise details.)

While it may be surprising that so many of the BBYA books are geared towards the younger pre-teen, perhaps it should not be. The decision to include books that span a wide age range seems to be a wise one. According to Michael Cart, President of YALSA "The borders of the land of young adult have always been ill-defined and subject to negotiation." In fact, today's YA librarians feel that the age span for their clientele is about 10-14.[33] This, even though YALSA considers them to range from 12-18.

The same holds true when it comes to including a variety of adult titles. Deborah Taylor in her talk at the New York Public Library on "Teens In Troubled Times" states that the younger YAs, those aged 11-14 are well served by librarians and publishers, while older teens, aged 14-18 are lacking direction. She believes that once they are able to read adult books they will choose to do so.[34] An article from the *Irish Times* in Dublin also supports this conclusion. It states that 11-13 year olds get the most from the teen

department, while 15-16 year olds tend not to read the books that are written for their age group. They prefer to browse the adult department of the library or bookshop instead.[35]

Diversity of Author's Perspective in Books Appearing on the BBYA list, 1994-1998

One of the purposes of this study is to determine if the BBYA list represents a number of different perspectives from diverse points of view. Therefore a variety of characteristics of the persons who are responsible for the works on the list have been studied. They are analyzed below. The content of works has also been examined for this purpose and will be discussed later in this study.

Frequency of an Author's/Editor's Work & Percentage of Books by First Time Authors

The frequency with which an author or editor's work appears on the list is important to note. If the list is composed of large numbers of the same author's works year after year, then new and diverse perspectives may not be represented by the works on the list. Therefore the list was analyzed to determine if the same authors appeared on the list in great numbers or if there was a variety of authors listed, both new and established talent.

Table 8 shows the frequency with which the authors appeared on the BBYA list combined for the years 1994-1998. Authors Walter Dean Myers and Gary Paulsen (who each had books appearing on both the nonfiction and fiction lists) each appeared on the list 5 times representing a total of 10 books, or 2.6% of the total books on the list. Three other authors (Caroline B. Cooney, Chris Lynch and Carolyn Meyer) appeared on the list 4 times each, representing another 12 books, or 3.1% of the books on the list.

Additionally, 9 authors and editors wrote 3 books each, representing a total of 27 books, or 7% of the total books on the list. (Paul Fleishman, Russell Freedman, James Cross Giblin, Cynthia Grant, Margaret Peterson Haddix, Karen Hesse, Donna Jo Napoli, Ann Rinaldi, and Hazel Rochman) In total, 36.5% percent of the authors were represented by at least 2 books each, or 141 titles while 63.5% of authors had only one book appearing on the list representing 245 titles. Although some of the more popular and prolific authors have appeared on the list multiple times, 305 separate authors represent the 386 fiction and nonfiction works appearing on the list, suggesting that the list does in fact offer varying perspectives.

Table 9 shows more evidence that the list contains diverse points of view. It represents the number of first time novelists whose fiction works have appeared on BBYA lists under study. It shows that the works of new authors has appeared on the BBYA list for each of the 5 years under study. Of the 266 fiction books represented, first time novelists authored 32, a total of 12%. (Note that Amazon.com only provided this information about first time-authors for fiction titles.) Since the majority of books appearing on the list are represented by authors of only one work (63%) and a significant number of new authors are being represented on the list, (12% of fiction titles) it appears that the BBYA list has in fact represented a number of different perspectives from diverse points of view. (See Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix E for more details.)

Author/Editor Gender for nonfiction and fiction books

It is interesting to note that of the 120 nonfiction books on the BBYA lists, 55% are written or edited by males, while only 38.3% are written or edited females. Even

more interesting is the fact that for fiction works, these figures are completely opposite. Male authors and editors wrote only 36.5% percent of these books while 62% are written or edited by females. When nonfiction and fiction works are combined, the percentages of male to female authors and editors was 54.7% of books were written or edited by female authors while 42.2% were written by males. There were other books written by mixed gender teams as well as a few by authors whose gender could not be determined, but whose numbers were statistically insignificant. Even though there is some disparity between the sexes, (The resident population of the U.S. shows that the gender breakdown is nearly equal in a 49% female to 51% male ratio.)[36] it is clear that both male and female perspectives are being well represented in the works recommended for young adults on the BBYA list. The reason for the disparity of the gender between nonfiction and fiction writers as shown above is unknown.

It is important to note that in cases where gender was not explicitly or implicitly stated (as in a reference to he or she) in either Amazon.com's entry nor that of the other sources referred to, gender was determined based on the this researcher's determination of the commonality of the first name as being female or male. In instances where names were either uncommon, foreign or common to both genders, authors and editors were put into an undetermined category as discussed above. (See Tables 10, 11, and 12 in Appendix E for more details.)

Number and Percentage of BBYA Books Represented by Minority Authors

Another factor important in determining author or editor perspective is to consider ethnic background. In many cases this information was not easily obtained. Although

Amazon.com often mentioned an author's or editor's ethnicity, in most cases it was only stated where such information added to the understanding of the work and only in rare instances when the author was not a part of a minority group. In addition, it was difficult to obtain information on a number of the authors on the list as they were not included in any of Galenet's author databases. A study of the entries that were available in Galenet's Contemporary Literary Criticism Select showed that although authors had the opportunity to offer information as to their personal background and ethnicity, many chose not to include this information. It is likely, however, that the majority of these authors did not include such data in their entries because they were not of any minority group.

Tables 13, 14, and 15 represent the number and percentages of books represented by minority authors as best as they could be determined. Out of 120 nonfiction books, 22, or 18% were written by minority authors, mostly Blacks (15%). 2.5% were written by Asians and .8% by American Indians. Hispanics represented none of the books. Of the 266 fiction books, only 23, or 8.6% were written by minority authors, more than half being Black (4.5%). 1.9% were written or edited by Asians, 1.5% Hispanics and .7% by American Indians. Collectively, for both nonfiction and fiction books, 45 or 11.6% were written or edited by minorities, 8.3% by Blacks, 2% by Asians, 1% by Hispanics and .8% by American Indians.

According to the estimates of December 1998 of the U.S. Census bureau, fully 27.7% of the American populace are composed of minorities, 12.1% Black, 11.4% Hispanic, 3.7% Asian and .7% American Indian.[37] Although American Indian authors (there were no Eskimos or Aleuts) were represented in numbers close to their numbers in the general population for nonfiction and fiction works, the other minority groups were

not. Blacks, while over-represented by 2.9% in nonfiction works (15% vs 12.1%), were very under-represented in works of fiction, accounting for a total of only 4.5% of the books represented. Hispanics were clearly under-represented in both nonfiction and fiction works while Asians were represented at an average of approximately half of their percentage in the United States population. (See tables 13, 14 and 15 in Appendix E) If this data proves to be correct, it clearly shows a lack of minority talent being represented on the BBYA list. The reasons for this disparity, are once again not within the scope of this study, but would clearly merit further research.

An Analysis of Format and Content of Works on the BBYA lists, 1994-1998

Young Adults, as do the population at large, require a variety of reading materials to satisfy individual needs and interests. It is therefore important that the available books offer variety in terms of their format, setting and content. As the diversity of authors and editors themselves was studied, so should that which they have chosen to write about be examined to determine if it offers a variety of perspectives and points of views.

BBYA Nonfiction Books

Formats/Types of Nonfiction Books

Books were divided into format/type groupings once all of the data had been collected. Initially, each book was placed in very specific categories for which Table 16 shows the breakdown. Since some of the categories overlap with each other, Table 17 shows the categories combined so that all of the biographies are together, as are all of the

photo works, artworks, and poetry. Of the 120 nonfiction books, more than one third were biographical in nature (34.3%), exactly one third were either photo works or artworks and 18.3% were works of poetry. Research of public school librarians has shown that young adults are particularly partial to biographies and poetry and that they prefer books that are heavily illustrated.[38]

Although the BBYA lists from 1994-1998 show a substantial number of works in these popular types and formats, Table 16 confirms that other types of nonfiction books popular with teens are clearly under-represented. For example, Reference, Informational and Instructional works only comprise 4.2% of the nonfiction works represented. A 1986 study of junior high school circulation records conducted in Houston Texas found that the trivia book, The Guiness Book of World Records, was by far the most widely circulated book across all three campuses involved in the study. In addition, "how to" drawing books were checked out by these junior high students in great numbers.[39] Further study may be able to bring to light why more of these types of books are not included on the BBYA lists. (See Tables 16 and 17 in Appendix E.)

Time Periods and Locations of Settings for Nonfiction Books

Of the 88 nonfiction books for which a time period was applicable and could be determined, over 85% took place in the Twentieth Century; at least half of those taking place between 1951 and the present. Twelve books took place in the Nineteenth Century although only 4 of those did not extend into the Twentieth Century as well. Just over 3% of books took place prior to 1800. Of the 82 nonfiction books for which a setting could be obtained 64, or 78% took place within the United States. Sixteen or 19.5% took place in

Europe and 4.9% took place in the Far East. (See Tables 18, 19 and 20 in Appendix E for more details.) Although there is not a tremendous diversity in time and setting, it should not be surprising to find that most nonfiction books have taken place within the Twentieth Century in which we live and in the United States, where the vast majority of the books were authored and published.

Topical Matter of nonfiction books

Tables 21 A – 21 I show a detailed breakdown of the topical matter of the 120 Nonfiction books represented by the BBYA lists for the years 1994-1998. Table 22 summarizes the results. Nearly a quarter of the works (24.2%) were of a multicultural nature. Interestingly, 10% of the nonfiction books were on subjects related to the Holocaust, (which would account for the relatively large percentage of books that take place in Europe) and 9.2% were about various wars. Books on sports accounted for 8.3% of the books on the list, while books on a host of contemporary issues and books about nature, and man and animal's relationship to the environment accounted for 7.5% of books each. Books dealing with illness, disease and physical challenges accounted for 4.2% of the works on the list. In addition to these topics, one fifth of the books on the BBYA lists contained works on miscellaneous topics such as the Chicago Fire and the American Depression. (See Tables 21 A – 21 I and Table 22 in Appendix E for a much more detailed analysis of topical issues.)

Although the books on the BBYA list are well representative of some topics such as that of the Holocaust, a host of other topics have not been included at all. Naturally no one booklist could possibly represent all of the potential topics that would be of interest

to teens and clearly, even if one could, there are not even books available representing the full gamut of human experience. Even so, an effort should be made to try to include books on a greater variety of topics. In any case, the BBYA list does include the types of works that teens prefer, books about minorities and other cultures, history as well as contemporary issues, sports and the arts.[40]

BBYA Fiction Books

Formats, and Genre of Fiction Books

The fiction books on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults for the years 1994-1998 were comprised mostly of novels, (94.7%) with the remaining 5.3% being comprised of anthologies of short stories. (See Table 23 in Appendix E) Of these fiction books, almost half (46.9%) were Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Problem Novels, (including sports novels which comprised 7.9% of that figure), and over a quarter (26.3%) were works of Historical Fiction. Fantasy works accounted for 10.5% of the fiction books, Romance 7.5%, Science Fiction 5.3% Mystery and Suspense 4.1%, Humor and Horror, each 3.4%, and Adventure 3%. As many of the books were combinations of two or more genre, they were counted more than once therefore these percentages are more than 100%. (See Tables 24 A – 24 B in Appendix E for more details)

Making determinations as to the genres of novels is a way of grouping titles that are similar in content.[41] Categorizing books by genre can in many cases be fairly subjective. While it is often easy to determine if a book is a work of Science Fiction, Fantasy, or Mystery, it is not always easy to classify books as Humor, Adventure or

Romance. This is especially true when one is only referring to the synopsis of the book and book reviews to make one's determination. After a careful study of each book's entry in Amazon.com and gaining a familiarity with genre fiction from Teen Genreflecting authored by Diana Tixier Herald, this researcher made such determinations while recognizing that in some cases others might have reached different conclusions. For this reason, one might not consider these genre determinations as gospel, but rather a guide by which some conclusions can be reached.

For example, it is clear that there is an abundance of Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Problem Novels available to YAs on the Best Books for Young Adult's lists from 1994-1998. There is also what appear to be a plentiful supply of Historical Fiction available. What appears to be lacking are works of Mystery, Adventure, Humor and Horror. It is not known from the results of this study if this is because such works are not being written for this audience, or because available works are not deemed of high enough caliber to be included on the list. What is clear, however, is that Young Adults do enjoy Mystery, Suspense, and Horror as evidenced by the tremendous interest in adult authors who write in these genre, authors such as John Grisham, Stephen King, Mary Higgins Clark and V.C. Andrews proving especially popular among older teens.[42] None of these authors have made the BBYA lists for the years under study.

Time Periods and Settings of Fiction Books

With the exception of some of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Novels that take place in the future, the vast majority of books on the list are either historical or contemporary in their time periods. As is the case with defining particular genre, in

some measure the determination as to what period of time should be considered "historical", and which "contemporary" is largely subjective. As Diana Tixier Herald states in her book Teen Genreflecting, "What is history depends on one's perception." She goes on to say that to teenagers, the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War are considered history as these events happened before they were even born.[43] Therefore, for the purposes of this study, books considered to be historical in nature have taken place prior in 1975 while those that have taken place within the last quarter of the twentieth century have been considered to be contemporary.

Historical Fiction

Seventy of the 266 works on the Best Books for Young Adult's list from 1994-1998 fall within the above definition of Historical Fiction. As Table 25 shows, of those, almost one third (31.4%) take place between 1900-1949, and over a quarter (27.1%) take place from 1950-1975. Books taking place in the 1800s account for another 14.3%, while 18.5% take place prior to 1799 but after biblical, ancient and prehistoric times which account for another 7.2% of the works of this genre. In addition, 1.4% of these books take place during a span of time throughout hundreds of years and/or several generations. (See Table 25 in Appendix E for more details)

Once again, it should not seem surprising that the majority of works of historical fiction have taken place within the last 75 years, especially since so much has been written on the Holocaust. Also, as in the case of nonfiction works, there are significant gaps in World and American History that are left unfilled and it is not within the scope of

this study to determine if there is a lack of literature in this area or whether there are books written that just have not made YALSA's list.

As with nonfiction books too, the majority of fiction works take place in the United States (54.2%) followed by those that take place in Europe, 25.7%. As stated before, this is largely a result of books on the subject of the Holocaust. Almost 6% of fiction books took place in Mexico, South, or Central America and 11.6% of the books took place in Africa Canada, Oceana, the Middle East and Far East. One of the books is "prehistory" and simply has the earth as its setting. (See Table 26 in Appendix E for more details.) Obviously, vast portions of the world are not covered by these works, yet they do show more diversity than their nonfiction counterparts and as is the case with them, it should not mystify anyone as to why so many of these books take place in this century and in this country (United States).

Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Problem Novels

As stated earlier, for the purposes of this study, contemporary works will be defined as those that have taken place since 1975. Realistic Fiction, deals with those topics that are likely to occur in the "real world", problem novels being defined by Diana Tixier Herald as "deal[ing] with some of the worst things that can happen in the life of a teen."[44] One hundred and twenty of the 266 fiction novels on the Best Books for Young Adults list from 1994-1998 fell within the Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Problem Novels Genres. Table 27 depicts the variety of issues that these works dealt with and the frequency of occurrence of various themes. Since most works fell into two or more categories, if totaled, their percentages will be greater than 100%.

A brief glance at table 27 shows a host of unpleasant "realities" that are reoccurring themes in many of today's books of this genre. These include topics such as child abuse, violence, crime, and poverty, under privilege, death and suicide. Nearly half of the books on the list (46.7%) dealt with Family life, a great many focusing on the problems of dysfunctional families. Books with themes of child abuse and of death and suicide accounted for topical matter in 15.8% books, each. Another 14.2% involved themes of violence and crime. Even the 14.2% of the books involving themes of love rarely ended on a happy note. (See Table 27 in Appendix E for more details.)

Although it is clear that there is a glut of depressing themes in contemporary fiction, it is equally apparent that there is a lack of stories of humor and adventure as well as ones in which the characters of positive role models are being developed. The heavy use of these themes in the YA novel has caused much discussion among librarians and other adults as to the ethics of young adult literature. Some question, for example, whether or not death is a suitable topic for young people.[45] Others are asking if some of the themes of some of the YA novels are not getting a little too risqué.[46]

The supposedly great service of the Problem Novel has enabled kids to read about others not unlike themselves. As Marc Aronson put it, this "Hey I'm not alone, other people have felt what I feel" reality is at the core of young adult fiction.[47] That these books mirror the worst aspects of home and society may lead one to wonder, however. Don't any teens grow up healthy and happy in a "normal" family? If so, do young adults, authors, and publishers all consider that are they just too boring to write about?

Diversity of Protagonists in Books Appearing on the BBYA list, 1994-1998

As previously stated, one of the purposes of this study is to determine if the BBYA list represents a number of different perspectives from diverse points of view. In addition to looking at author characteristics and subject content, it is also important to study the protagonists (the main characters) of the novels listed to see if they, too represent diversity.

Age and Gender of Protagonists of Fiction Books

Table 28 shows the age and gender characteristics of the 317 protagonists of YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998. This figure does not include those books where main characters could not be determined as in the case of the short story anthologies. Table 29 depicts the percentages of males to females in YA fiction. It shows that although for individual years, there was a slight disparity between the numbers of male and female protagonists, in total for the years under study, the breakdown was almost an exact match to the gender breakdowns in the United States population.[48] They were 50.8% female and 49.2% male. (See Tables 28-29 in Appendix E for more details.)

Table 30 similarly depicts the percentages of age ranges of the protagonists in young adult fiction for the BBYA list for the years under study. Although this information was not available for approximately 28% of the 317 protagonists noted, an examination was made of the information that was obtained. It shows that the largest category of protagonists, 17.4%, were of the age ranges of 15-16, and that 15.5% were

aged 13-14 while 14.8% were 17-18. A smaller percentage, (12.3%) were in the 11-12 age range. *Only 2.5% of the protagonists were under age 11 and just 6.6% were over 18.*

Since young adult literature is distinguished largely by the fact that its characters are young adult and since it is widely held that children and teens like to read about others of their own age, it may be concluded that the bulk of young adult literature is written for an intended audience of 11-18, which is largely in line with YALSA's designated ages from 12-18. (See Table 30 in Appendix E)

Minority Status of Protagonists of Fiction Books

Of the 250 books for which protagonist characteristics could be determined, Table 31 shows us that 22.8% of them contained at least one minority protagonist. (Note that protagonists of short stories included in anthologies were not included in these figures and that Judith Ortiz Cofer wrote a book of short stories about Hispanics and that Lori Carlson edited a work of short stories about Asian Americans.)

Table 32 shows the numbers and percentages of minority protagonists for the fiction books on the BBYA list for 1994-1998. Of all the protagonists, 9.5% are Black, 3.8% Asian, 1.9% Native American and 1.6% Hispanic. Once again, if we compare these figures to the United States population at large, we see that Blacks who comprise 12.1% of the U.S. population are under-represented by 2.6%, and that Hispanics, who represent 11.6% of the population are vastly under-represented by a whopping 9.8%. Once again, these numbers are somewhat lowered by the fact that the works of Lori Carlson and Judith Ortiz Cofer could not be included. On the other hand, Native Americans who account for less than .7% of the U.S. population account for 1.9% of the protagonists

under study and Asians who represent less than 3.8% of the U.S. population are represented in the BBYA list at an almost equal percentage (3.7%).

Overall, for the years 1994-1998, Table 33 shows that 19.6% of the protagonists represented on the BBYA lists are of these minority groups as compared to 27.9% of Americans in the general U.S population.[49] Although it is clear that there is representation from all of these minority groups in the United States, the numbers of Blacks and Hispanics are clearly not well represented in the literature. It is not within the scope of this study to determine the reasons for this, but further research could help determine if this were a result of a lack of books being published that contain minority characters or if such books have just not been included in the BBYA lists under study.

Table 34 further breaks down the minority protagonists to determine which minority groups were represented the most in the fiction books under study, and compares these figures to the percentage of a particular minority group within the U.S. population. Of the 62 minority protagonists, nearly half, (48.4%) were Black, their representation being slightly above the 43.3% of minorities they represent in the U.S. population. Similarly, Asians, comprise 19.4% of the main characters in the fiction books, significantly more than their 13.3% representation in the U.S. population would suggest. This over representation was especially true for Native Americans too. Although they represent less than 2.5% of the total U.S. minority population, they accounted for over 9.7% of the books with minority protagonists on the BBYA lists under study.

Hispanic representation is another story, however. Although Hispanics represent 40.9% of the minority population in the United States, they comprised only 8% of the

minority protagonists represented on the BBYA lists for 1994-1998. It is unclear why there are so few Hispanics main characters in the literature. This in itself could be the subject of much research. In addition to the minority groups mentioned, 11.3% of the protagonists on the BBYA lists were biracial, and of varying mixed races, and a relatively small percentage of characters did not fall within the specified minority groups as mentioned above. (See Tables 31, 32, 33, and 34 in Appendix E for more details.)

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Young Adults are somewhat of an enigma. We know they exist, but we're not really sure who they are. We know they have needs, but we are not clear on how best to meet them. Much of our confusion stems from the lack of a universal agreement of what age ranges encompass the Young Adult. While the Young Adult Library Services Association considers the young adult to fall within the age range of 12-18, today most YA librarians feel that their patrons are within the age range of 10-14, and booksellers consider children to be YA's as early as age 9.[50] In addition, young adults not only vary in age, but in their levels of insight and maturity as well as in the variety of their interests and needs. For these reasons it is especially important that this very diverse group of young people have access to a wide variety of interesting reading materials written at many reading levels. It is also essential that these materials be of the kind that has proven appeal for the young adult audience for whom they are intended. YALSA's mission to provide a recommended list of such materials is indeed a very noble one.

For the most part YALSA has been successful in meeting their goals. The books on their BBYA lists for the years from 1994-1998 demonstrate a good ratio of nonfiction to fiction works as well as a good balance of books available in both paperback and hardcover. In addition, books from both new as well as established authors and editors, both male and female, have appeared on the list contributing a variety of perspectives. The BBYA lists also have a range of reading levels extending from easy reading picture books for the reluctant reader, to books intended for a mature, or adult audience. This

can be demonstrated not only by the fact that Amazon.com recommended the same works for a variety of audiences, but because kids like to read about others like themselves. The fiction protagonists in the books included on the list are well distributed both in terms of age and gender.

While books from the BBYA list did show diversity from different points of view, the list did have some shortcomings. Although the works of minority authors were represented on the list, their numbers were less than one would expect based upon their presence in the United States population overall. The same held true for the numbers of minority protagonists appearing in fiction works. In both cases, this was found for Blacks and especially for Hispanics. Further research would be needed to determine the cause for this disparity.

Diversity in terms of content was also lacking to some extent. For nonfiction books the BBYA list contained a large number of biographies, poetry and pictorial works, yet reference, informational and instructional works were few in number. For fiction books, there was a mix of works of Historical and Contemporary Realism, yet there were few books in the Mystery, Humor, Horror, and Adventure genres. In addition, the works of Historical Fiction contained many books about the Holocaust, but very few works representing periods of time prior to the 1800s. For fiction books, the supposedly realistic works were overwhelmingly about dysfunctional families and depressing themes.

While there may be large numbers of books of a particular topic or theme appearing on the BBYA lists, this is not necessarily bad, nor is it necessarily due to any ill conceived recommendations on YALSA's part. For example, the fact that YALSA

has included so many books on the lists that dealt with the Holocaust was likely to have been because a smaller number of books were published on other similarly important and interesting topics, such as the Vietnam War or Cambodian genocide

The same may well hold true for books of different genre. Are there so few mysteries on BBYA's list because there are fewer books of this genre written for the young adult, or is it simply that those that are were not found to be of acceptable literary merit to be included on the list? The latter scenario may well be the case for some books that are not included on the list. For example, YAs are partial to books that spin off from popular movies and TV shows. Fiction series have been published on several recent shows including Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Dawson's Creek and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. These books may be considered to be "junk food" for the teenage soul, they are rarely published in hardback, and they are considered to be largely ephemeral.

Another fact to consider is that older teens are flocking to adult books in large numbers, while works of tremendous literary merit written for their age ranges are going unread simply because older teens don't want to select from the same books that young teens or preteens select from. This may suggest a need to reorganize the young adult books into separate sections based upon appropriate age levels, but this would certainly be considered a radical idea and its further study would be warranted.

Despite its shortcomings, YALSA's BBYA list does provide an exceptional source from which librarians and teachers can use to select and recommend appropriate materials for their young adult patrons and students. This study is only an attempt to provide information that supports the need for some specific ways in which the list could be improved to further enhance its usefulness.

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[45] Bowler, 49.

[46] Sara Mosle, "The Outlook's Bleak: Judging From What Teen-Agers are Reading, They're Growing Old Before Their Time," *The New York Times Magazine* (August 2, 1998) : 34.

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Appendix A

The Young Adult Library Services Association Best Books for Young Adults Policies and Procedures as Excerpted from Betty Carter's Book Best Books for Young Adults Published by the American Library Association Chicago, 1994

APPENDIX

BBYA Policies and Procedures

YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION BEST BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Charge

To select from the year's publications significant adult and young adult books; to annotate the selected titles.

Purpose of the List

The list presents books published in the past 16 months that are recommended reading for young adults (12 to 18).

It is a general list of fiction and nonfiction titles selected for their proven or potential appeal to the personal reading tastes of the young adult.

Such titles should incorporate acceptable literary quality and effectiveness of presentation. Standard selection criteria consonant with the ALA Library Bill of Rights shall be applied.

Fiction should have characterization and dialog believable within the context of the novel or story.

Nonfiction should have an appealing format and a readable text. Although the list attempts to present a variety of reading tastes and levels, no effort will be made to balance the list according to subject or area of interest.

Target Audience

The list is prepared for the use of young adults themselves and annotations will be written to attract the young adult reader.

These policies and procedures took effect with the Best Books for Young Adults Committee that selected the list, Midwinter 1993.

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Eligibility Time Frame

The committee will consider and vote on books published within their assigned calendar year, January 1 to December 31, in addition to those published between September 1 and December 31 of the previous year. Both field and committee nominations will be accepted for books that meet the published criteria.

Nominations may be accepted from the field and committee up to November 1 of that calendar year.

Managing the List

A book's nominator may, by October 1, remove from nomination any title that person nominated. These titles removed from nomination may be placed back in nomination by other committee members.

A book that is removed from the list during the year may be renominated for the next year's list as long as that book meets the publishing criteria.

Discussing the List

After observer comments, the chair will provide each book's nominator with the first opportunity to address that title if he/she so desires.

Committee Members

Members are appointed by the vice-president/president-elect of YALSA for a one-year term renewable for a two-year consecutive term. Members are expected to attend all committee meetings and read widely from books eligible for nomination. Reappointment is not automatic, but instead is based upon participation.

Members will be appointed on a staggered basis so that the ideal committee will have five new members appointed each year. Each term begins at the conclusion of one Midwinter and ends at the conclusion of Midwinter at the end of the term. Members who have served two consecutive terms may not be reappointed to the committee for five years from the conclusion of their last term.

If someone resigns, the current president of the Association appoints a new person to fill that particular term.

There are fifteen personal committee members. The editor of the "Books for Youth" section of *Booklist* is a nonvoting member of the committee and serves as a consultant.

Chair

The chair is appointed by the vice-president/president-elect for a one-year term and, as such, has the right to vote, to validate titles (by a vote) for consideration on the list, and to enter into discussion of titles. It should be understood, however, that the primary responsibility of the chair is facilitator of the committee's charge, including all business matters. The chair

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should only discuss a title after other committee members have had an opportunity to speak so as not to unduly influence the decision.

An administrative assistant will be appointed in consultation with the committee chair by the president-elect of YALSA. This administrative assistant will assist the chair in duties that may include the following: maintaining the nominations' database, tabulating votes, and other such duties assigned by the chair. The administrative assistant is a nonvoting member of the committee.

Voting Procedures

Final selections are made at the Midwinter Meeting during an intensive series of meetings. After comments from observers and discussion by committee members, a vote is taken to determine if a title should be included on the final list.

A book must receive a minimum of nine "yes" votes to be placed on the final list regardless of the number of the fifteen-member committee present and voting. Only members attending the Midwinter Meeting will be allowed to vote. Members can only vote on books they have read. If a committee member must leave before the final vote, that member must give a signed ballot to the chair, who will designate a voting proxy for the absent member. The final vote will be counted by the consultant and the administrative assistant.

After the final discussion and selection, titles are then annotated by the committee. These annotations are completed at the last meeting of the committee.

Availability of Lists for General Distribution

The first list of titles nominated will be made available at the Annual Conference and will be mailed to interested individuals or institutions if they send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the YALSA office with their requests.

The final list of nominations will be available after November 1 and again will be mailed out upon request with a SASE. Committee members and the chair can also make these copies available on request, but because of the volume of copying, the YALSA office should be the main contact.

At Midwinter, lists with an addendum will be available to observers, along with nomination forms and rules for observers.

All committee meetings will be open to ALA members as long as they are willing to follow the guidelines set up for observers. Before the committee discusses each suggested title, an opportunity will be given to observers to make short comments about the books (two to four minutes per title) but the chair reserves the right to cut short the discussion if necessary.

Publishers' representatives are requested to refrain from participating in discussion or making comments about their own books.

While comments from individuals outside the organization are certainly encouraged and necessary for discussion, according to ALA policies 7.4.1 and 7.4.3 only registered ALA members may participate in com-

mittee meetings. Comments from nonmembers must be channeled through registered ALA members.

The final list of selected titles will be available, as a press release, from the ALA public information office the morning following the committee's last meeting. The YALSA office will mail press releases to interested persons on request.

Miscellaneous

1. No nominations should be accepted unless they are submitted on an official nomination form. The chair should respond to all nominations not received on the proper form.
2. If possible, a nomination form should be reproduced in *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* (JOYS). Nomination forms should be made widely available and notices of where to obtain them should be printed in all the standard professional publications.

Approved by YALSA Board, July 1991

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Appendix B

The Young Adult Library Services Association's
Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998
Booklist Magazine Listings

"Best Books for Young Adults, 1994" *Booklist* 94 (March 15, 1994) : 1356-1359.

"Best Books for Young Adults, 1995" *Booklist* 93 (April 1, 1995) : 1399-1401.

"Best Books for Young Adults, 1996" *Booklist* 92 (March 15, 1996) : 1274-1284.

"Best Books for Young Adults, 1997" *Booklist* 91 (April 1, 1997) : 1286-1296.

"Best Books for Young Adults, 1998" *Booklist* 90 (March 15, 1998) : 1210-1218.

Appendix C

Nonfiction and Fiction Coding Sheets
Used to Collect Data for Books Listed by the
Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Coding Sheet for Fiction Books

Books on the YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults Recommended list.

Background information for Title: _____

YALSA's Listing year		94 95 96 97 98	
Author of Book		_____	
Author of the Book (if more than one)		_____	
Author's Gender		M	F
Author's Gender (if more than one)		M	F
Author's Ethnicity** (see key on page 2)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
Author's Ethnicity** (if more than one)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
Author's Ethnicity not specified or NA			
Publisher of Pbk	_____	Publisher of Hdcvr	_____
Paperback (pages)	_____	Hardcover (Pages)	_____
Reviewing sources	Booklist _____	Kirkus _____	Horn _____
_____	Sch&/or Library bd	S/l Pub _____	Turtle- Demko ___

Appropriate age or grade level as stated by Amazon.com and/or reviewers:

Not Specified	
Specified only as Young Adult	
Specified as ages 9-12	
Specified in booklist -2	
Specified in kirkus –3	
Ages 9-12	Grades 4-6
Age 12	Grade 6
Age 13	Grade 7
Age 14	Grade 8
Age 15	Grade 9
Age 16	Grade 10
Age 17	Grade 11
Age 18	Grade 12

Format of fiction books:

Short stories		Novel	
Anthologies		Illustrated	

Genre

Mystery/Suspense		Westerns	
Romance		Historical Fiction	
Humor		Adventure	
Science Fiction/Fantasy		Movie/TV Tie-Ins	
Horror		Paranormal	
Religious/spiritual		Realistic fiction*	
Multicultural Literature		Other	_____

Realistic Fiction-subtopics*:

Sex		Substance Abuse	
Love		Spousal Abuse	
Love gone wrong		Child Abuse	
Homosexuality		Wars	
Gangs		Secret Past	
Violence/crime		Death	
Social issues other		Suicide	
Sports		Headline	
Diseases		Racial prejudice	
Sibling relationships		Phys. Challenged	
Parent-teen relationships		Other	

Protagonist(s) characteristics:

Age		Gender	M	F	Ethnicity**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age		Gender	M	F	Ethnicity**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age		Gender	M	F	Ethnicity**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age		Gender	M	F	Ethnicity**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

****Key to ethnicity:**

White	1	Native American /Alaskan	5
Black	2	Asian/Pacific Islander	6
Hispanic	3	Mixed	7
Filipino	4	Other	8

Setting- Time(s) and Place(s):

Not Specified or NA		Not Specified or NA	
Future-beyond 2000		United States	
1990s		Canada	
1980-1989		Mexico/Central America	
1960-1979		South America	
1940-1959		Middle East	
1920-1939		Africa	
1900-1919		Eastern Europe	
1850-1899		Northern Europe	
1800-1849		Western Europe	
1750-1799		Far East	
1700-1749		Oceania	
1600s		Russia/USSR/FSSR	
1500s		Fantasy Worlds	
Before 1499		Other	

Coding Sheet for Non-Fiction Books

Books on the YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults Recommended list.

Background information for Title: _____

_____

YALSA's Listing year	94 95 96 97 98		
Author of Book	_____		
Author of the Book (if more than one)	_____		
Author of the Book (if more than two)	_____		
Author's Gender	M	F	
Author's Gender (if more than one)	M	F	
Author's Gender (if more than two)	M	F	
Author's Ethnicity** (see key on page 2)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
Author's Ethnicity** (if more than one)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
Author's Ethnicity** (if more than two)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
Author's Ethnicity not specified or NA			
Author as Autobiographer's Aid			
Editor's Name			
Photographer's Name			
Illustrator's Name			
Publisher of Book Pbk	_____	Country Published	_____
Publisher of Book Hd	_____	Country Published	_____
Reviewing sources	_____	_____	_____
_____	Sch& Lib /Turtle	S Pub _____	T Pub _____
Hardcover		Paperback	
Pages Hdbk		Pages Pbk	

Appropriate age or grade level as stated by Amazon.com and/or reviewers:

Not Specified	
Specified only as Young Adult	
Specified in Amazon's catagories (below)	
Specified in booklist (see below)	
Specified in kirkus (see below)	
Ages 9-12	
Grades 4-6	
Age 12	Grade 6
Age 13	Grade 7
Age 14	Grade 8
Age 15	Grade 9
Age 16	Grade 10
Age 17	Grade 11
Age 18	Grade 12

Format of non-fiction books:

Speeches& Writings		Poetry	
Short Stories		Vignettes	
Memoirs/ Autobios		Anthologies	
Biographies		Photo-works*	
Interviews		Art-works**	
Diaries/Journals		Reference	
Adventure		Other	

*includes photoessays, photobiographies, photodocumentaries and photohistories
**illustrated by works of art or illustrations including photographs of artworks

Topic of non-fiction books:

Politics		Science	
Current Events		Nature	
Historical		Astronomy	
Wars		Ecology/Conserva	
Religion/Culture		Animals	
Psychology		Native Americans	
Suicide		African Americans	
Homosexuality		Holocaust	
Teen Life		Asian Experience	
Gangs/Violence		The Unexplained	
Music		Reference	
Diseases		Mixed Topics	
Sports		Other	

Setting- Time(s) and Place(s):

Not Specified or NA		Not Specified or NA	
Future-beyond 2000		United States	
1990s		Canada	
1980-1989		Mexico/Cen America	
1960-1979		South America	
1940-1959		Middle East	
1920-1939		Africa	
1900-1919		Eastern Europe	
1850-1899		Northern Europe	
1800-1849		Western Europe	
1750-1799		Far East	
1700-1749		Oceania	
1600s		Russia/USSR/FSSR	
1500s		Fantasy Worlds	
Before 1499		Other	

Appendix D

Databases Used to Obtain Information on
The Young Adult Library Services Association's
Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Amazon.com. Available on the web: http://www.amazon.com Seattle, Wa. (Accessed periodically from April 1998-March 1999)

Books in Print with Book Reviews. Available through Infotrac on the web: http://web7.searchbank.com/itw/session/73/704/9052165w5/1!vdb_BIPR R.R. Bowker, 1999. Reed Elsevier, Inc. (Accessed periodically from December 1998-March 1999)

Contemporary Literary Criticism Select. Available from The Gale Group on the web: http://www.galenet.com/servlet/GLD/form?I=3 (accessed periodically from December 1998-March 1999)

Contains:

Contemporary Authors
Contemporary Literary Criticism, and
The Dictionary of Literary Biography

Novelist Database. Available from OPLIN (Ohio Public Library Information Network) on the web: http://carl.oplin.lib.oh.us.nlweb.html Carl Corporation, 1998. (accessed periodically from January-February, 1999)

Appendix E

Tables for the Analysis of Data of the
Young Adult Library Services Association
Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Tables 1 A-1 B

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Numbers of Nonfiction and Fiction Books Represented

Table 1 A

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total books represented
Nonfiction	19	19	34	22	26	120
Fiction	59	54	47	48	58	266
Totals	78	73	81	70	84	386

Percentages of Nonfiction and Fiction Books Represented

Table 1 B

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total books represented
Nonfiction	24.4%	26.0%	42.0%	31.4%	31.0%	31.0%
Fiction	75.6%	74.0%	58.0%	69.6%	69.0%	69.0%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Hardback and Paperback Availability

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented*

Year	Available only in hardback	Available only in paperback	Available in both hardback and paperback	Unknown	Total number of books available in hardback	Total number of books available in paperback
1994	6	6	7	0	13	13
1995	10	2	6	1	16	8
1996	16	9	9	0	25	18
1997	6	7	9	0	15	16
1998	12	4	10	0	22	14
Total	50	28	41	1	91	69
Percentage of books	41.7%	23.3%	34.2%	.083%	75.8%	57.5%

*Note: There are 120 ~~nonfiction~~ non-books on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult's fiction list (1994-1998)

Table 3

Best Books for Young Adults 1994-1998

Hardback and Paperback Availability

Fiction Titles

266 Books Represented*

Year	Available only in hardback	Available only in paperback	Available in both hardback and paperback	Unknown	Total number of books available in hardback	Total number of books available in paperback
1994	5	15	36	3	41	51
1995	3	14	36	1	39	50
1996	4	16	26	0	30	42
1997	6	12	30	0	36	42
1998	12	6	40	0	52	46
Total	31	63	168	4	199	231
Percentage of books	9.3%	23.6%	62.6%	1.5%	75.0%	86.8%

*Note: There are 266 books on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult's fiction list (1994-1998)

Table 4

Best Books for Young Adults 1994-1998

Hardback and Paperback Availability

All Titles - Nonfiction and Fiction

386 Books Represented*

For years 1994-1998	Available only in hardback	Available only in paperback	Available in both hardback and paperback	Unknown	Total number of books available in hardback	Total number of books available in paperback
Nonfiction	50	28	41	1	91	69
Fiction	31	63	168	4	199	231
Total	81	91	209	5	290	300
Percentage of books	21.0%	23.6%	57.1%	1.3%	75.1%	77.7%

*Note: There are 386 books total on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults list (1994-1998)

Table 5

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Intended Audience as Designated by Amazon.com

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Intended audience	Number of books Represented	Percentage of books represented*
Ages 4-8	3	2.5%
Ages 9-12	32	26.7%
Young Adult**	36	30.0%
Not Specified***	49	40.8%
Total Nonfiction Titles	120	

*Note: Percentage of books designated as being appropriate for the various intended audiences
**Note: Amazon.com defines young adult as starting at age 13 as opposed to YALSA which defines young adult as starting at age 12.
***Note: Not noted as being primarily for a juvenile or young adult audience.

Table 6

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Intended Audience as Designated by Amazon.com

Fiction Titles

266 Books Represented

Intended audience	Number of books Represented	Percentage of books represented*
Ages 4-8	1	Not significant
Ages 9-12	54	20.3%
Young Adult**	163	61.3%
Not Specified***	48	18.0%
Total Nonfiction Titles	266	

*Note: Percentage of books designated as being appropriate for the various intended audiences
**Note: Amazon.com defines young adult as starting at age 13 as opposed to YALSA which defines young adult as starting at age 12.
***Note: Not noted as being primarily for a juvenile or young adult audience.

Table 7

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Intended Audience as Designated by Amazon.com

All Titles - Nonfiction and Fiction

386 Books Represented

Intended audience	Number of books Represented	Percentage of books represented*
Ages 4-8	4	1.0%
Ages 9-12	86	22.2%
Young Adult**	199	51.6%
Not Specified***	97	25.1%
Total nonfiction books	386	

*Note: Percentage of books designated as being appropriate for the various intended audiences
**Note: Amazon.com defines young adult as starting at age 13 as opposed to YALSA which defines young adult as starting at age 12.
***Note: Not noted as being primarily for a juvenile or young adult audience.

Table 8

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

The Frequency of an Author or Editor's Work on the List

All Titles - Nonfiction and Fiction

386 Books Represented

Number of times an author or editor's work appears on YALSA'S list →	5	4	3	2	1	Total number of authors* and books** on list ↓
Number of authors whose books have been on list the number of times above	2	3	9	46	245	305*
Number of books represented by authors/editors on the list	10	12	27	92	245	386**
Percentage of books represented by authors/editors on the list→	2.6%	3.1%	7.0%	23.8%	63.5%	100%

*Note: The total number of authors is less than the total number of books because several books were authored or edited by the same persons.

**Note: Since many works were either written or edited by two or more people, the total number of authors and editors is greater than the total number of books on the list. (386 books are on the list)

Table 9

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Percentage of Books by First Time Authors as Designated by Amazon.com

Fiction Titles Only*

266 Books Represented

Year →	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Totals
Total number of fiction books on YALSA list	59	54	47	48	58	266
Number of first time authors on YALSA fiction list	7	6	5	11	4	32
Percentage of books written by first time authors	11.9%	11.1%	10.7%	23.0%	6.9%	12.0%

*Note: This information was available from Amazon.com only for the fiction titles.

Table 10

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number of Books Represented by Author/Editor's Gender*

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Author/Editor's gender	Number of books represented	Percentage of books Represented	Resident population of the U.S.**
Singular female or multiple authors all female	46	38.3%	49%
Singular male or multiple authors all male	66	55.0%	51%
Undetermined (singular or multiple authors)	1	.8%	
Multiple authors female and male	7	5.8%	
Total nonfiction books	120		

*Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where authors have been responsible for multiple works, their gender has been tallied more than once.
**Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)

Table 11

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number of Books Represented by Author/Editor's Gender*

Fiction Titles

266 Books Represented

Author/Editor's gender	Number of books represented	Percentage of books Represented	Resident population of the U.S.**
Singular female or multiple authors all female	165	62.0%	49%
Singular male or multiple authors all male	97	36.5%	51%
Undetermined (singular or multiple authors)	4	1.5%	
Multiple authors female and male	0	0%	
Total nonfiction books	266		

*Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where authors have been responsible for multiple works, their gender has been tallied more than once.
**Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)

Table 12

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number of Books Represented by Author/Editor's Gender*

All Titles – Nonfiction and Fiction

386 Books Represented

Author/Editor's Gender	Number of books represented	Percentage of books Represented	Resident population of the U.S.**
Singular female or multiple authors all female	211	54.7%	49%
Singular male or multiple authors all male	163	42.2%	51%
Undetermined (singular or multiple authors)	5	1.3%	
Multiple authors female and male	7	1.8%	
Total of all books	386		

*Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where authors have been responsible for multiple works, their gender has been tallied more than once.

**Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)

Table 13

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number and Percentage of Books Represented by Minority Authors/Editors*

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Author/Editor's race**	Number of books represented	Percentage of books represented	Resident population of the U.S.****
Black	18	15.0%	12.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2.5%	3.7%
Hispanic***	0	0%	11.4%
American Indians/Eskimos/Aleuts	1	.8%	.7%
Total representation of minority authors/editors	22	18.3%	27.9%

*Note: Minorities as identified by such sources as contemporary authors and information supplied by Amazon.com However, it was not possible to obtain information on all authors as some were not listed in contemporary authors and others that were did not make note of their ethnicity. Therefore, some minority authors may not be included in these figures.

**Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where minority authors have written or edited multiple works their minority status will be tallied more than once.

***Note: Those of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

****Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)

Table 14

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number and Percentage of Books Represented by Minority Authors/Editors*

Fiction Titles

266 Books Represented

Author/Editor's race**	Number of Books Represented	Percentage of books represented	Resident population of the U.S.****
Black	12	4.5%	12.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	1.9%	3.7%
Hispanic***	4	1.5%	11.4%
Native Americans/Eskimos/Aleuts	2	.7%	.7%
Total representation of minority authors/editors	23	8.6%	27.9%

*Note: Minorities as identified by such sources as contemporary authors and information supplied by Amazon.com However, it was not possible to obtain information on all authors as some were not listed in contemporary authors and others that were did not make note of their ethnicity. Therefore, some minority authors may not be included in these figures.

**Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where minority authors have written or edited multiple works their minority status -will be tallied more than once.

***Note: Those of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

****Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)

Table 15

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number and Percentage of Books Represented by Minority Authors/Editors*

All Titles – Nonfiction and Fiction

386 Books Represented

Author/Editor's race*	Number of books represented	Percentage of books by minority authors	Resident population of the U.S.****
Black	32	8.3%	12.1%
Asian/Pacific Islanders	8	2.0%	3.7%
Hispanic***	4	1.0%	11.2%
American Indian, Eskimos, Aleuts	3	.8%	.9%
Total representation of minority authors/editors	47	12.2%	27.9%

*Note: Minorities as identified by such sources as contemporary authors and information supplied by Amazon.com However, it was not possible to obtain information on all authors as some were not listed in contemporary authors and others that were did not make note of their ethnicity. Therefore, some minority authors may not be included in these figures.

**Note: Since the number of books represented is being measured, in cases where minority authors have written or edited multiple works their minority status -will be tallied more than once.

***Note: Those of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

****Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See Works Cited)

Table 16

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Format

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Main format	Numbers of books in each format	Percentage of books in each format
Biographies/Autobiographies/Memoirs/ Diaries/Journals	32	26.7%
Photo works/Picture books and Artworks*	25	20.8%
Poetry anthologies	16	13.3%
Narratives/Accounts of true events	11	9.2%
Photo biographies and Art biographies	9	7.5%
Other combined formats**	8	6.7%
Poetry with art or photographs	6	5.0%
Interviews/Oral histories/Speeches/Writings/Profiles	6	5.0%
Reference/Informational/Instructional	5	4.2%
Short story anthologies/Folk & Fairy tales	2	1.7%
Total nonfiction books	120	

*Note: Books are so designated in cases where the photographs or artworks are central to the format of the books such as in the case of photo-essays, photo-biographies, photo-documentaries, photo-histories, and picture books, etc. Several other books not designated as Photo Works or Artworks may also contain photographs and/or artwork.

**Note: These are books where there are multiple formats and may include works that combine short stories, essays interviews, etc. They are listed separately from the combined formats shown above, such as Poetry with art or photographs.

Table 17

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Totals for Combined Format*

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Totals for combined formats above**	Numbers of books in each format	Percentage of books in each format
Total biographies	41	34.2%
Total photo works and artworks	40	33.3%
Total poetry	22	18.3%

*Note: These books are counted separately for each format. Therefore each of these books is counted in at least two places. For example, a photo-biography is counted once as a biography and then again as a photo work.
**Note: Based on the total of 120 nonfiction books as represented in Table 16.

Table 18

Best Books For Young Adults Booklists, 1994-1998

Time Period of Books as Designated by Amazon.com*

Nonfiction Titles

88 Books Represented**

Time period***	Number of books represented	Percentage of books represented
1951-Present	38	43.2%
1900-1950	17	19.3%
1900-Present (spans both halves of century)**	12	13.6%
Span of time including both 1800s and 1900s	8	9.1%
Spans several time periods of history	6	6.8%
1800's	4	4.5%
1700s	1	1.1%
1500s-1600s	1	1.1%
Ancient times	1	1.1%
Total	88	100.0%

*Amazon.com did not state time periods for all of the books on the list, however, those that could reasonably be assumed to have taken place within a certain time period based on their subject content have been included in the time periods deemed appropriate.

**Note: Of the 120 nonfiction books, it was only possible to determine the time period for 88 of them. In those cases where the time period could not be determined, it was either because the books entry in Amazon.com did not specify a time period or because the work's subject matter was not specific to a certain period of time. An example of this is Bruce Fogle's Encyclopedia of the Cat. Of those books for which a time period could not be determined, it is likely that most have taken place within the latter half of the twentieth century as no other time periods were specified.

***See Table 19 on the following page for combined totals of books taking place in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in their entireties.

Table 19

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Cumulative Time Periods for Books as Designated by Amazon.com*

Nonfiction Titles

88 Books Represented**

Time period	Number of books represented	Percentage of books represented
Twentieth century	75	85.2%
Nineteenth century	12	13.6%
Spans several time periods	6	6.8%
1500-1700	2	2.3%
Ancient times	1	1.1%
Total nonfiction books for which a time period could be determined***	96***	109.0%***

*Amazon.com did not state time periods for all of the books on the list, however, those that could reasonably be assumed to have taken place within a certain time period based on their subject content have been included in the time periods deemed appropriate.

**Note: Of the 120 nonfiction books, it was only possible to determine the time period for 88 of them. In those cases where the time period could not be determined, it was either because the books entry in Amazon.com did not specify a time period or because the work's subject matter was not specific to a certain period of time. An example of this is Bruce Fogle's Encyclopedia of the Cat. Of those books for which a time period existed, but could not be determined, it is likely that most have taken place within the latter half of the twentieth century as no other time periods were specified.

***Note that 8 books have time periods that span portions of both the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore the numbers reflect more than the 88 nonfiction books whose time periods have been specified and the percentage of books represented is more than 100.

Table 20

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Location of Setting of Books as Designated by Amazon.com

Nonfiction Titles

82 Books Represented*

Setting	Number of books represented	Percentage of books represented
United States (excluding Arctic)	64	78.0%
Europe	16	19.5%
Far East	4	4.9%
Arctic	2	2.4%
Canada (excluding Arctic)	1	1.2%
Africa	1	1.2%
Mexico	1	1.2%
Total nonfiction books for which a location could be determined**	89**	108.5%**

*Note: Of the 120 nonfiction books, it was only possible to determine the location of setting for 82 of them. In those cases where setting could not be determined, it was either because the books entry in Amazon.com did not specify a location or because the work's subject matter was not location specific as in the case, for example, of the Bruce Fogle's Encyclopedia of the Cat. Of those books for which a location exists but could not be determined, it is likely that most have taken place within the U.S. as no other locations were specified.

**Note: Several books had settings that spanned a variety of locations. Therefore the numbers reflect more than the 82 nonfiction books whose locations have been specified and the percentages of books represented is over 100%.

Tables 21 A – 21 I

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Themes

Nonfiction Titles

120 Books Represented

Table 21 A

Multicultural experience	Number of books with theme	Percentages of books with theme
African/African American experience*	19	15.8%
Native American experience	3	2.5%
Asian/Asian American experience	3	2.5%
Hispanic/Hispanic American experience	3	2.5%
Multicultural experience-general	1	.8%
Totals	29	24.2%

*Note: Two of the nonfiction books represent combined topics. Both of them deal with the African American Experience combined with another topic. Therefore when these books are added to the second topic they will be counted twice, equaling 122, not 120. (The total number of nonfiction books listed on YALSA's best books for young adult's list.) Therefore total percentages will be over 100 also.

Table 21 B

The American experience	Number of books with theme	Percentages of books with theme
American experience (general)	7	5.8%
Totals	7	5.8%

Table 21 C

Contemporary Issues	Number of books with theme	Percentages of books with theme
Gangs/Crime/Violence/Abuse	6	5.0%
Gay/Lesbian issues	1	.8%
Suicide	1	.8%
General	1	.8%
Totals	9	7.5%

Table 21 D

Wars	Number of books With theme	Percentages of books with theme
World War II* (excludes Holocaust)**	2	1.7%
Vietnam War	2	1.7%
Civil War	2	1.7%
Trojan War	2	1.7%
Revolutionary War	1	.8%
War in Sarajevo (Bosnia)	1	.8%
Several wars	1	.8%
Totals	11	9.2%

*Note: Two of the nonfiction books represent combined topics. One of the books is about the African American experience during World War II. Due to this fact, the book has been counted twice. Therefore the books when added together will equal 122, not 120. (The total number of nonfiction books listed on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult's list.) Therefore total percentages will be over 100 also.
**See Holocaust category

Table 21 E

Holocaust	Number of books With theme	Percentages of books with theme
Excluding books of WWII*	12	10.0%
Totals	12	10.0%

*Note: see World War II Category

Table 21 F

Arts	Number of books With theme	Percentages of books with theme
Fine Arts	3	2.4%
Literature	2	1.7%
Music	1	.8%
Totals	6	5.0%

Table 21 G

Sports	Number of books with theme	Percentages of books with theme
Women's	5	4.2%
Men's*	4	2.5%
General or mixed	1	.8%
Totals	10	8.3%

*Note: Two of the nonfiction books represent combined topics. . One of the books is about the African American experience in sports. Due to this fact, the book has been counted twice. Therefore the books when added together will equal 122, not 220. (The total number of nonfiction books listed on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult's list.) Therefore total percentages will be over 100 also.

Table 21 H

Illness/Disease/Physical Challenge	Number of books With theme	Percentages of books with theme
Diseases-mixed	2	1.7%
Mental illness	1	.8%
AIDS	1	.8%
Physically challenged	1	.8%
Totals	5	4.2%

Table 21 I

Nature, man and animals	Number of Books With Topic	Percentages of books with theme
Nature, man and animals	6	5.0%
Ecology/Conservation/Endangered species	3	2.5%
Totals	9	7.5%

Table 21 J

Miscellaneous themes	Number of Books With Topic	Percentages of books with theme
General poetry (non-topic or mixed topic anthologies)***	6	5.0%
General biographies (no other topic assigned)***	5	4.2%
Science	4	3.3%
Love/Loneliness	3	2.5%
Animals (not nature related)	3	2.5%
Disasters (Chicago Fire)	1	.8%
Coming of age	1	.8%
American Depression	1	.8%
Totals	24	20%

***Note: Biographies and Poetry anthologies have been included in other topical areas when applicable. Note also that Biographies and Poetry have been classified under format also. See nonfiction format tables.

Table 22

Best Books For Young Adults, 1994-1998

Cumulative Topical Matter of Nonfiction Books

120 Books Represented

General themes	Number of Books With Topic	Percentages of books with theme
The Multicultural experience*	29	24.2%
The American experience (General)	7	5.8%
Holocaust	12	10.0%
Wars*	11	9.2%
Sports*	10	8.3%
Contemporary issues	9	7.5%
Nature, man and animals	9	7.5%
Arts	6	5.0%
Illness/Disease/Physical challenges	5	4.2%
Miscellaneous themes	24	20.0%
Totals	122*	101.7%*

*Note: Two of the nonfiction books represent combined topics. Therefore the books when added together will equal 122, not 220. (The total number of nonfiction books listed on YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult's list.) Therefore total percentages will be over 100 also.

Table 23

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Format of Books

Fiction Titles

266 Books Represented

Year→	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total number of books represented	Percentage of books represented
Novels	57	50	43	48	54	252	94.7%
Short story anthologies	2	4	4	0	4	14	5.3%
Total fiction books	59	54	47	48	58	266	100.0%

Tables 24 A – 24 B

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Genres of Fiction Books

266 Books Represented

Table 24 A

Year→	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total books in genre	Percentage of books in genre*
Realistic/Contemporary Fiction/Problem Novels	30	22	24	19	30	125	46.9%
Historical Fiction	16	19	11	13	11	70	26.3%
Fantasy	7	7	3	4	1	28	10.5%
Romance	5	2	6	2	8	20	7.5%
Science Fiction	1	4	1	4	4	14	5.3%
Mystery/ Suspense	1	1	2	3	4	11	4.1%
Humor	2	1	4	1	1	9	3.4%
Horror	1	2	2	3	0	8	3.4%
Adventure	4	7	4	5	5	25	3.0%

*Note: The percentage of fiction books that fell within a certain genre. Due to the fact that some books fell within the scope of more than one genre, they are counted more than once. Therefore the numbers will add up to more than the 266 books represented and that percentages if added will also be more than 100%

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Sub-genre Sports**

Fiction Books

21 Titles Represented

Table 24 B

Sports**	4	2	5	6	4	21	7.9%

**Note: Sports has been considered a sub-genre and has thus been included with other books, almost all within the realistic fiction genre.

Table 25

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Time Periods

Historical Fiction

70 Books Represented*

Time Period	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Totals books in time period	Percentage of Books in time period
1950-1975**	3	4	4	5	3	19	27.1%
1900-1949	6	5	2	5	4	22	31.4%
1800s	3	2	1	2	2	10	14.3%
1700s	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.4%
1500-1600s	0	2	2	0	1	5	7.1%
0-1499	1	2	2	0	2	7	10.0%
Biblical/ancient	0	1	0	1	0	2	2.9%
Prehistory	2	1	0	0	0	3	4.3%
Span of time	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.4%
Total historical Fiction books represented	15	18	11	14	12	70	100.0%

*Note: Of the 266 fiction books, 70 of them are historical fiction

**Note: For the purposes of this research, historical is deemed anything 1975 or older.

Table 26

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Settings

Historical Fiction

70 Books Represented*

Setting	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Totals	Percentage of books in setting
United States	11	8	3	9	7	38	54.2%
Europe	0	4	6	4	4	18	25.7%
Mexico, Central America, South America	2	1	1	0	0	4	5.7%
Canada	0	1	0	0	1	2	2.9%
Africa	1	1	0	0	0	2	2.9%
Far East	0	2	0	0	0	2	2.9%
Oceana & Islands	1	0	1	0	0	2	2.9%
Middle East	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.4%
Earth	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.4%
Total historical fiction books represented	15	18	11	14	12	70	100.0%

*Note: Of the 266 fiction books, 70 of them are historical fiction

Table 27

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Problem Novel
(Includes sports books and some short story collections*)
(Does not contain the themes of other genre**)

Themes***

120 Books Represented

Themes	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total	Percentage of Books with theme***
Family relationships/Family Life/Family Problems	9	12	11	9	17	56	46.7%
Sports/Dance/Skating	4	2	6	6	5	23	19.2%
Death/Suicide	3	4	4	1	7	19	15.8%
Child abuse	3	5	2	5	4	19	15.8%
Love	4	3	4	4	3	17	14.2%
Violence/Crime	4	4	5	2	2	17	14.2%
Friendship	4	2	5	2	1	14	11.7%
Substance abuse	3	2	4	1	2	12	10.0%
Diseases/Mental illness	1	2	1	2	3	9	8.3%
Prejudice	1	2	1	3	2	9	7.5%
Homosexuality	1	2	3	1	1	8	6.7%
Physical/Mental challenge	4	1	1	0	2	8	6.7%
Teen pregnancy/Teen parenthood	2	2	2	0	1	7	5.8%
Religious issues	0	0	3	0	1	4	3.3%
Foster Care/Adoption	0	1	1	0	2	4	3.3%
Poverty/Underprivilege	1	1	1	0	1	4	3.3%
Politics	2	1	0	0	1	4	3.3%
Secret past	0	1	0	0	2	3	2.5%
Accidents	0	1	1	0	1	3	2.5%
Biracial children	0	0	0	0	2	2	1.7%
Gangs	1	0	0	0	1	2	1.7%

*Note that many books have more than one theme. Therefore the total number of books will add up to more than 115 and the total percentage will add up to more than 100 percent.
**Note that these themes may also be present in books that are not considered to be contemporary realistic fiction and problem novels. For example, books of historical fiction may also contain these themes, yet they are not included here.
***The percentage of contemporary realistic and problem novels and short stories that deal with a particular theme.

Table 28

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Totals for Age and Gender of Protagonists of Fiction Books*

317 Protagonists Represented

Age↓	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		Total Age	
Gender→	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Under 11	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	3	5
11-12	3	8	6	0	2	0	6	8	4	2	21	18
13-14	3	4	6	5	4	5	6	1	9	6	28	21
15-16	5	6	5	5	6	9	6	2	7	4	29	26
17-18	6	6	4	4	3	4	5	6	3	6	21	26
Over 18	1	1	1	2	4	4	0	1	2	5	8	13
Not able to determine age**	11	9	12	10	2	3	9	7	13	13	47	42
Life span	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	4	5
Total gender	30	37	34	29	22	27	34	27	41	36	161	156
Total protagonists	67		63		49		61		77		317	

*Note: Seventeen works, comprised mostly of short story collections, had numerous protagonists and were therefore not included in these figures. This was also the case for one novel, a saga in which there are numerable main characters that spanned the generations. In addition, the main character of one book was a dog and was likewise not included.
Note also that the saga, as well as several of the short story collections, are multicultural works and that therefore the percentages of multicultural protagonists are somewhat higher than the numbers reflected above.
**Note: Textual Clues in the Amazon.com entries made it clear that most of these protagonists whose ages were not specified were either children or teens.

Table 29

Best Books for Young Adults, 1998-1994

Percentages of Female and Male Protagonists in Fiction Books

317 Protagonists Represented

Year →	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		Total	
Total Protagonists→	67		63		49		61		77		317	
Gender→	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Total Gender	30	37	34	29	22	27	34	27	41	36	161	156
Percentage of gender	44.8 %	55.2 %	54.0 %	46.0 %	44.9 %	55.1 %	55.7 %	44.3 %	53.2 %	46.8 %	50.8 %	49.2 %

Table 30

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Percentages of Age Ranges in Fiction Books*

317 Protagonists Represented

	Total Protagonists		Percentage of each gender in each age range		Both Male & Female	Total percentages for Male & Female
Gender→	F	M	F	M	B	Total
Under 11	3	5	.95%	1.6%	8	2.5%
11-12	21	18	6.6%	5.7%	39	12.3%
13-14	28	21	8.8%	6.6%	49	15.5%
15-16	29	26	9.1%	8.2%	55	17.4%
17-18	21	26	6.6%	8.2%	47	14.8%
Over 18	8	13	2.5%	4.1%	21	6.6%
Not able to determine age**	47	42	14.9%	13.2%	89	28.0%
Life span***	4	5	1.3%	1.6%	9	2.8%
Total	161	156	50.8%	49.2%	317	100.0%

*Note that in some cases grades rather than ages were given for protagonists. In these cases an age/grade equivalent was used to estimate age. For example, a sixth grader was considered to be in the 11-12 age range.

**Note: Textual Clues in the Amazon.com entries made it clear that most of these protagonists whose ages were not specified were either children or teens.

***Note: Life span refers to those situations where time periods spanning several years of the protagonists life. This category also applies to situations in which the main character as an adult flashes back to a time period in his or her youth.

Table 31

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Numbers and Percentages of Fiction Books containing Minority Protagonists*

Fiction Books

250 Books Represented**

Year →	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Totals
Total number of fiction books*	55	49	43	48	54	250**
Total number of books containing minority characters	15	12	8	9	12	57
Percentage of books containing Minority protagonists**	27.3%	24.5%	18.6%	18.8%	22.2%	22.8%

*Note also that the saga, as well as several of the short story collections, are multicultural works and that therefore the percentages of multicultural protagonists are somewhat higher than the numbers reflected above.

**Note: Sixteen works, comprised mostly of short story collections, had numerous protagonists and were therefore not included in these figures. This was also the case for one novel, a saga in which there are numerable main characters that spanned the generations. In addition, the main character of one book was a dog and was likewise not included.

Table 32

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Number and Percentage of Minority Protagonists*

Fiction Books

62 Minority Protagonists Represented

Minority↓ Year →	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total minority characters	Percentage of minority characters	Percentage of minorities in U.S. Population**
Black	7	7	7	7	2	30	9.5%	12.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	3	1	0	5	12	3.8%	3.7%
Biracial	0	1	1	1	4	7	2.2%	Not applicable
American Indian/Eskimo /Aleut	4	1	1	0	0	6	1.9%	.7%
Hispanic	2	1	0	1	1	5	1.6%	11.4%
Other	1	0	0	0	1	2	.63%	Not applicable
Totals	17	13	10	9	13	62**	19.6%	27.9%

*Note: Seventeen works, comprised mostly of short story collections, had numerous protagonists and were therefore not included in these figures. This was also the case for one novel, a saga in which there are numerable main characters that spanned the generations. In addition, the main character of one book was a dog and was likewise not included.
**Note also that the saga, as well as several of the short story collections, are multicultural works and that therefore the percentages of multicultural protagonists are somewhat higher than the numbers reflected above.

Table 33

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Percentages of Minority Protagonists in Fiction Books*

62 Minority Protagonists Represented

Year →	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Totals and percentage of Protagonists
Total Protagonists	67	63	49	61	77	317
Total Minority Protagonists	17	13	10	9	13	62
Percentage of Minority protagonists	25.4%	20.6%	20.4%	14.8%	16.9%	19.6%

*Note: This figure does not include those books where main characters were not determined, such as the short story anthologies.

Table 34

Best Books for Young Adults, 1994-1998

Percentage of Minority Protagonists of Specific Minority Groups for Fiction Books

62 Minority Protagonists Represented

Ethnicity↓	Total Minority characters	Percentage of Minority protagonists in specific categories	Percentage of U.S. Minority population that is of a particular race*
Black	30	48.4%	43.3%
Hispanic	5	8.0%	40.9%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	6	9.7%	2.5%
Asian & Pacific Islander	12	19.4%	13.3%
Biracial	7	11.3%	Unknown
Other	2	3.2%	Not Applicable
Totals	62	100.0%	27.9%

*Note: These figures are based upon population estimates of November 1, 1998 as obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census. (See works cited)